

Ibuprofen●

What is ibuprofen?

Ibuprofen is a pharmaceutical drug that is classified as a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID).¹ Ibuprofen is used to treat a number of conditions including:

- mild to moderate pain
- severe pain (when combined with codeine)
- fever
- swollen, red and tender tissues (inflammation)
- rheumatoid arthritis, back pain and gout (in conjunction with physiotherapy).¹

Ibuprofen is usually swallowed and comes in different forms including:

- tablets
- capsules
- suppositories
- soluble powders
- liquids.¹

Other names

Ibuprofen may also be known by its brand or trade names. Some common examples include:

Generic Name	Brand Names
Ibuprofen	Brufen®, Nurofen®
Ibuprofen and codeine	Nurofen Plus®

Effects of ibuprofen

There is no safe level of drug use. Use of any drug always carries some risk – even medications can produce unwanted side effects. It’s important to be careful when taking any type of drug.

Ibuprofen affects everyone differently, based on:

- size, weight and health
- whether the person is used to taking it
- whether other drugs are taken around the same time
- the amount taken.

Side effects

The most common side effects of ibuprofen are:

- headache
- dizziness
- drowsiness, fatigue and restless sleep
- thirst and sweating
- tingling or numbness in hands and feet
- ringing in the ears
- blurred vision and eye irritation
- fluid retention and ankle swelling
- mild allergic reaction
- abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, heartburn, diarrhoea and constipation
- bladder irritation and pain, frequent urination.^{1,3}

NSAIDs such as ibuprofen can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke in people with or without heart disease or the risk factors for heart disease.¹

To find out more information on NSAIDs and heart issues visit the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) website: tga.gov.au/community-qa/nsaids-andcardiovascular-risks-questions-and-answers

Overdose

If you take more than the recommended dose, you could overdose. Call an ambulance straight away by dialling triple zero (000) if you experience any of these symptoms:

- confusion and disorientation
- drowsiness
- abdominal pain
- blurred vision
- tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- diarrhea
- nausea and vomiting
- vomiting blood that may look like coffee grounds and bowel motions that look like black tar
- severe allergic reaction, including swelling of the face
- kidney and liver problems
- seizures/convulsions
- coma and death.^{14, 5}

Long-term effects

It's best to discuss the side effects of long-term use with a medical practitioner. Regular use of ibuprofen may eventually cause:

- anaemia due to bleeding in the stomach
- impaired hearing
- kidney and liver damage
- bleeding in the stomach and bowels
- increased risk of heart attack.¹

Using ibuprofen with other drugs

The effects of taking ibuprofen with other drugs, including alcohol, prescription medications and other over-the-counter medicines, can be unpredictable.

Ibuprofen taken with alcohol can increase the risk of stomach irritation and discomfort.¹

Ibuprofen can alter the effects of some blood pressure medicines and may increase the risk of bleeding if taken with medicines such as warfarin.¹

Getting help

If your use of ibuprofen is affecting your health, family, relationships, work, school, financial or other life situations, you can find help and support.

Call 1300 85 85 84 to speak to a real person and get answers to your questions as well as advice on practical 'next steps'.

You can also search our list of Support Services for services in your local area - adf.org.au/help-support/

References

1. Upfal J. Australian Drug Guide. 8th edition ed. Victoria: Griffin Press; 2016.
2. Cairns R, Karanges EA, Wong A, Brown JA, Robinson J, Pearson S-A, et al. Trends in self-poisoning and psychotropic drug use in people aged 5–19 years: a population-based retrospective cohort study in Australia. *BMJ open*. 2019;9(2):e026001.
3. Plus M. Ibuprofen: American Society of Health-System Pharmacists; 2016 [cited 2020 March 12,]. Available from: <https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a682159.html>.
4. Hunter LJ, Wood DM, Dargan PI. The patterns of toxicity and management of acute nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) overdose. *Open access emergency medicine : OAEM*. 2011;3:39-48.
5. Mayo Clinic. Ibuprofen (Oral Route) Precautions: Mayo Clinic; 2020 [Available from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements/ibuprofen-oral-route/precautions/drg-20070602>].

Always call an ambulance on triple zero (000) if an overdose is suspected: tell the paramedic exactly what has been taken. Paramedics are there to help and will not involve the police unless there is a danger to themselves or others.

Other help, support services and resources

Links to further help and support • adf.org.au/help-support/

Medicines Line • 1300 633 424

Further information

DrugInfo • 1300 85 85 84

Free confidential information and advice about alcohol and other drugs (9am - 5pm, Mon-Fri)

Family Drug Help • 1300 660 068 • www.familydrughelp.com.au (Victorian-based)

Services are available to support those around you who may be affected by your drug use. As well as providing understanding, they can provide information about how best to help during treatment.

Family Drug Support • 1300 368 186 • www.fds.org.au (Australia-wide)




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